

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, also known as the Welfare Reform Act, dramatically changed the administration of and requirements for welfare programs. One of the goals of welfare reform was to “end dependence of needy parents upon government benefits by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage.” To help reach this goal, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) officially replaced Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) in 1997.

Unlike AFDC benefits, TANF benefits are tied to economic behavior, because the program requires that most adult recipients must “work” after 2 months of aid. TANF broadly defines work as labor force participation, such as working for the community or state in order to receive benefits (workfare), looking for employment or being employed. Work may also include work-related activities, such as schooling, vocational training, general skill development, or other types of training.

Nationally, the number of mothers participating in the primary public assistance program for families decreased by about 50% between 1996 and 2000 from 3 million to 1.5 million, according to data collected since the passage of welfare reform and released by the Commerce Department’s Census Bureau. According to the report entitled Work and Work-Related Activities of Mothers Receiving Temporary Assistance to Needy Families: 1996, 1998 and 2000, produced by the U.S. Census Bureau:

- From 1996 to 2000, the number of mothers participating in AFDC/TANF decreased by about 50%.
- Of TANF mothers who worked in 1998, 2 of 3 did so voluntarily while the other third said they were required by the welfare office to work.
- About 278,000 mothers receiving TANF were in training in 1998; nearly 75% of them were learning job skills for computer, clerical, machinery or other vocational jobs. About 62% of those mothers also received training in how to find jobs.
- Approximately 1 in 4 mothers on TANF who were working or in job training received a subsidy for child care in 1998.
- Black mothers represented a higher share of recipients of TANF benefits than non-Hispanic Whites, people of other race, or Hispanics, constituting roughly 38% of total recipient of TANF benefits in 1998.
- Non-Hispanic whites were 31% of TANF recipients, and Hispanics were 25% of TANF recipients in 1998.
- Forty-two percent of mothers on TANF did not graduate from high school, compared with only 13% of non-TANF mothers who did not graduate.
- While similar proportions of recipients and nonrecipients were high school graduates with no further schooling (36 and 32 percent respectively), only about 23% of TANF mothers had at least one year of college, compared with 56% of non-TANF mothers.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Missouri Women’s Council

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Missouri's Temporary Assistance

In Missouri, the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program is referred to as "Temporary Assistance". The purpose of the Temporary Assistance Program is to provide assistance to needy families with children so they can be cared for in their own home and to reduce dependency by promoting job preparation, work and marriage. Funds may also be used to prevent non-marital pregnancies and encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

In Missouri, eligibility requirements include:

The child who:

- is under the age of 18 years or 19 and attending high school or equivalent and expected to graduate;
- is in need of assistance because there is insufficient income to meet basic needs;
- is deprived of support because of the death, physical or mental incapacity or the continued absence from the home or unemployment;
- is living with one or both parents or a close relative who makes application for assistance.

and whose parent(s) with whom he or she is living:

- has not been convicted after August 22, 1996 in a Federal or State court of a felony or any crime related to illegal possession, use, or distribution of a controlled substance;
- does not own resources valued at more than \$1,000 at application, excluding the home and one car. Recipients may own resources valued to \$5,000 once a self-sufficiency pact is signed;
- assigns his or her rights for child support to the Department of Family Services (DFS) and further cooperates in identifying, locating and collecting child support from any parent who is absent from the home because of divorce, desertion, or abandonment;
- uses the money for the benefit of the children;
- attempts to support or help support the children by accepting employment when offered;
- applies for social security numbers for all members of the assistance group;
- is not a fleeing felon and is not in violation of a condition of probation or parole imposed under a Federal or State law.

For additional information on receiving TANF or eligibility requirements, contact:

Missouri Department of Social Services, Division of Family Services

P. O. Box 88

Jefferson City, MO 65103

Telephone: (573) 751-3221; Toll-Free: 1-800-735-2466

[www.http://www.dss.state.mo.us/dfs/tempa.htm](http://www.dss.state.mo.us/dfs/tempa.htm)

In Missouri as of December 2002

The average age of TANF recipients was 28 years old

95.1% are female and 4.9% are male

The average educational attainment level for TANF recipients was 11.2 years

48.4% are black, 46.6% are white, and 5.0% are other races

10.4% are currently employed

95.0% are single parents